



The mission of the Environmental Protection Agency is to protect human health and the environment. Since 1970, EPA has been working for a cleaner, healthier environment for the American people.



In 1970, President Richard Nixon and Congress established the U.S. EPA in response to the growing public demand for cleaner water, air, and land. EPA was tasked with monitoring, standard-setting, and enforcement activities to help protect our environment and to help Americans make a cleaner and safer environment. EPA research has been crucial to environmental legislature such as the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, the Pollution Prevention Act, and the Safe Drinking Water Act.

In addition to our continuing environmental mission, EPA's sustainability research is helping develop a better scientific understanding of the benefits people derive from nature. These benefits, referred to as ecosystem services, include flood control, biological diversity, and natural cycles that cleanse our air and water. Many of these benefits are difficult to quantify and are left out or undervalued in risk assessments and other analysis used to set environmental policies.

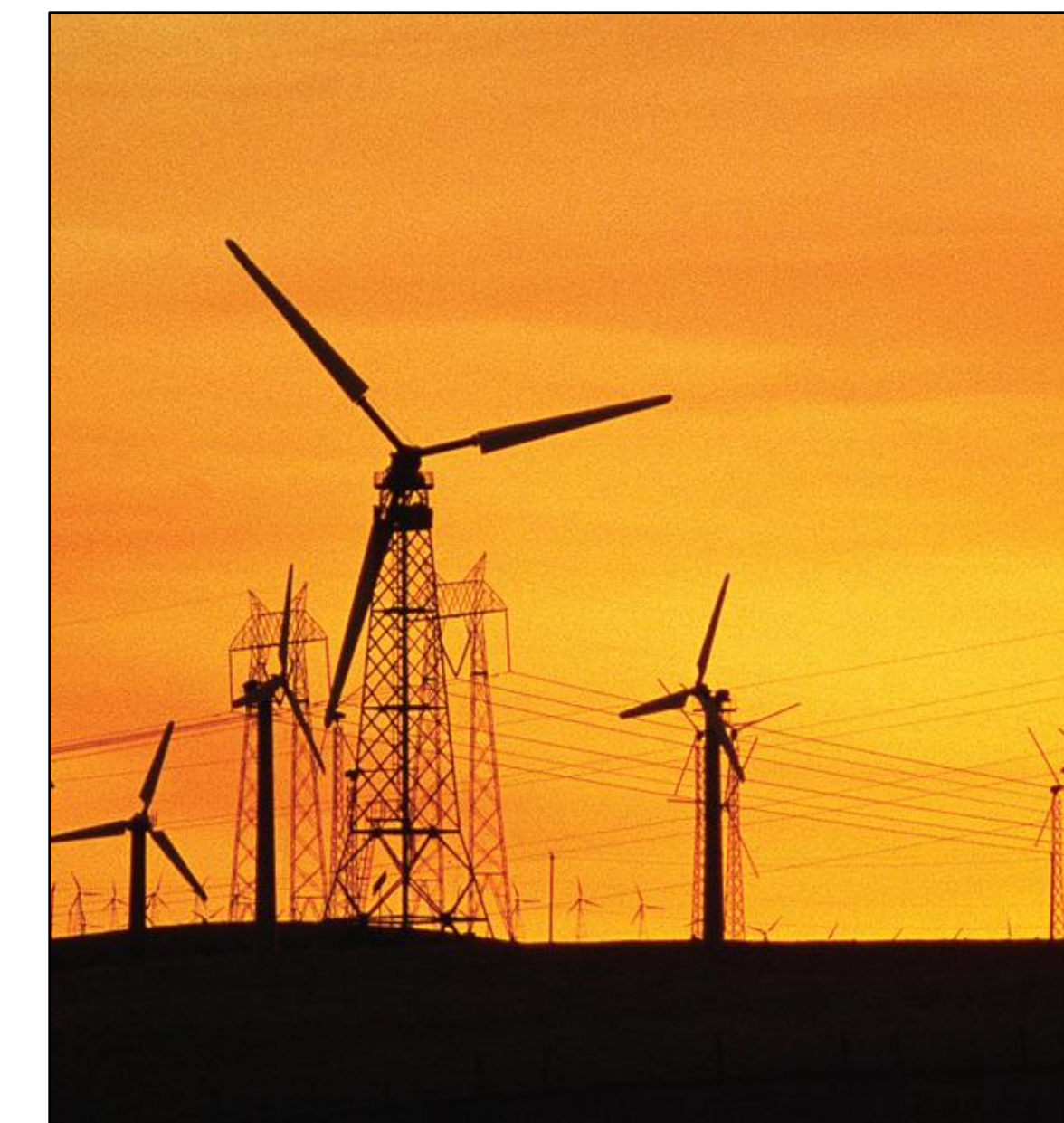


EPA's ecosystem services research is placing a monetary value on natural habitats such as wetlands and forests, thus capturing their vital roles in things like removing nitrogen pollution, providing habitat for wildlife, storing carbon, and preventing floods. The research is helping identify and assess these otherwise intangible values of natural ecosystems, thus providing a tool to help people make smarter choices about how and where to build our future communities and the infrastructure needed to support them.



Other EPA efforts in the area of sustainability practices include:

- Supporting development and conservation strategies that help protect our natural environment and make our communities more attractive, economically stronger, and more socially diverse.
- Helping to manage, protect, and restore water resources and ecosystems through sustainable management of natural resources
- Working to reduce atmospheric levels of pollution and greenhouse gases, promote green energy, and adapt to a changing climate.
- Promoting the use of cleaner materials and seeking to reduce material waste and chemical contamination.



The EPA offers a variety of tools and programs to help you learn how to reduce your environmental footprint and work toward a more sustainable future. EPA's Greener Products portal helps users search for green products, while partnership programs such as ENERGY STAR and WaterSense help you find and select water- and energy-efficient products.

### What does it mean to “be green”?

Consuming less energy, water, and other resources by:

- Driving a fuel-efficient vehicle, walking, or taking public transportation.
- Choosing ENERGY STAR® qualified appliances.
- Fixing leaks in your home and replacing inefficient water fixtures with WaterSense® labeled models.
- Recycling and reusing goods when possible, and reducing the amount of waste you create.

Making green purchasing choices such as:

- Giving preference to locally made food and other products.
- Selecting sustainably grown or organic foods.
- Purchasing products made with recycled materials.
- Choosing products with less packaging.